

For Official Release  
PR 001-02022023  
Office of the Governor  
Utulei, American Samoa  
February 02, 2023



## **Governor Lemanu visits Military families in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina** **“A position of Leadership is Simply a Place of Service”**



The Congregational Christian Church of Ft. Bragg & Fayetteville, North Carolina welcomed Governor Lemanu and his group to an uplifting and inspiring church service on Sunday, January 29, 2023. The church service was followed by an engaging Q&A session over *to'ona'i* prepared by the church members. Reverend Mana'omia Tauanu'u and his Faletua Se'ela Tauanu'u lead the Congregation with the support of Chairman Faasiusiuga Taumua, Vice Chairman Toaiva Aina, Secretary Uluai Taumua, and Treasurer Elsa Talalemotu-Smith. Like in many military installations with concentrations of soldiers of Samoan origin, the church is central to many Samoan retirees and active-duty military personnel stationed in Ft. Bragg.

Those who attended the service were moved by an inspiring sermon titled “Servant Leadership” delivered by the lay preacher and U.S. Army Major Tua Uilisone from Fagasa village. Major Tua encouraged the congregation to reflect on the example of Jesus Christ when he washed his disciples' feet. The disciples expected a warrior prince but Jesus Christ came as a serving prince.

A true leader must be willing to serve despite their title and calling. Major Tua invited the congregation to ponder on John 13: 1-10 and follow Jesus Christ to serve with no intentions to gain a reward. He reminded the congregation that “a position of leadership is simply a place of service”.

Governor Lemanu was given a few minutes to address the congregation. He thanked the community and the congregation for their hospitality and their faith in God. Governor Lemanu proceeded with the traditional acknowledgement of the *Susuga I le Fa'afeagaiga* and servants of God, the congregation, and all military service members and their families from the most senior to the youngest member. Governor Lemanu also acknowledged the Acting Governor, Honorable Talauega Ale and the first lady, Marian Ale, the cabinet, and the people of American Samoa who support our troops from afar.

Governor Lemanu reminded the congregation that the Samoan people who were born and raised in Samoa were taught specific roles and responsibilities to serve their families, villages, government and in the church.

“Samoa has four types of houses of service or school homes:

1. *Tunoa* (Outside Cookhouse)- Men and the young men prepare the *umu*
2. *Umu Kuka* (Kitchen)- Women prepare the main dishes
3. *Fale Tofā* (Sleeping House)- Where the family sleeps
4. *Fale tele* (Guest House)- All family meetings, special ceremonies, feasts, family prayers/churches, and welcoming of guests are held in this *fale*.”

We learn that the *Tunoa* is not only for preparing and making the *umu*. It is a place where the young men learn how to farm, care for the crops, and learn how to cook different Samoan traditional side dishes. It is not an easy learning process. It is hard work. Likewise, there are a lot of life lessons that can be learned from the other two houses. Governor Lemanu emphasized the importance of the *fale tele* or *fale talimalo*. When the *fale talimalo* is occupied for a gathering, it becomes a family, a village, a church and a government responsibility to support one another. The *fale talimalo* has its designated areas for each group. The *high chiefs and talking chiefs* sit in the *fale tele* to welcome and host guests. The *aumaga* or the young men are assigned to the back of the house to serve. The *faletua*, *tausi* ma *tama'ita'i* are assigned to the *umu kuka* to help prepare meals. The missing post is the *lumā fale* or the front of the house. Governor Lemanu stated that the Toa o Samoa take over this post in front of the house. “You are the providers and the caretakers for your families,” said Governor Lemanu. Governor Lemanu pointed out that our people have been spread across the globe, Churches have become our gathering places. Reverend Tauanu'u and the congregation is the *fale talimalo* because the congregation gathers all the Samoan in North Carolina without a village set up. In conclusion, Governor Lemanu once again thanked the Toa o Samoa for their selfless service (*tautua toto, tautua tuāvae, tautua matavela*) that will never be forgotten. “We are separated by miles and great distance, but we're closer in

prayers. All of the American Samoa people are rooting and supporting you in prayers. Thank you again for your service to our families and country. You are the protectors and providers of our homes”.

Following the church service, Governor Lemanu held an open panel discussion. The Governor’s panel included Chief of Staff Loa, Directors Matila, Tuato’o, Voigt, Tuato’o, and Tuiafono. MSG Iese Jerome opened the discussion asking the following questions:

- Is there a follow-up from the *Fitisemanu v. United States* forum led by Lt. Governor a few years ago? Will American Samoa Government make a stance about its political status?
- News reached Ft. Bragg about the new hospital. Is this in progress?
- Will Veterans be able to use their military ID to travel to American Samoa?
- Are there any programs for Veterans that are returning home?

Governor Lemanu provided responses for the majority of the questions and asked the directors to add to the discussion where it seemed relevant to their departments. The last question was about the possibility for people from Samoa to vote if they have lived in American Samoa for several years. Governor Lemanu explained that the administration is currently reviewing and researching this topic.

After the open panel, Governor Lemanu thanked the Church members for all their preparations. The congregation was delighted with the visit and appreciated Governor Lemanu’s presence with the Samoan community in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina.

###













































